

Message Text

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15

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-15 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01

DRC-01 /087 W

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R 272138Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3746

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 7117

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: LOPEZ REGA'S POSITION

1. SUMMARY: LOPEZ REGA HAS RETURNED TO ARGENTINA AND RESUMED HIS DUTIES AS MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE. HIS FUTURE, NONE-THELESS, REMAINS UNCERTAIN. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH SOME HAD BELIEVED HIM POLITICALLY DEAD, LOPEZ REGA RETURNED TO ARGENTINA SEP 22 AND SPENT EVENING SEP 23 IN VICENTE LOPEZ WATCHING ELECTION RETURNS WITH PERON AND ISABEL. HE RESUMED HIS DUTIES AS MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE ON SEP 24, EXACTLY AS HE HAD SAID HE WOULD DO. ON SEP 26, MOREOVER, HE ACCOMPANIED PERON AND ISABEL TO JOSE RUCCI'S FUNERAL.

3. THERE IS, EVEN SO, SOME DOUBT AS TO HIS FUTURE POSITION. SOURCE CLOSE TO LOPEZ REGA HAS TOLD EMBOFF THAT LATTER'S FUTURE ROLE STILL UNDER STUDY. LOPEZ REGA CONTINUES TO ENJOY ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE OF PERON, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, BUT IT MAY BE DEEMED MORE PRUDENT FOR HIM TO ADOPT A LOWER PROFILE, BOTH SO AS NOT TO ANTAGONIZE LEFT WING, WITH WHICH PERON ALREADY HAS PROBLEMS ENOUGH, AND ALSO BECAUSE OF THREATS TO LOPEZ REGA'S LIFE. SOURCE EMPHASIZED THAT GIVEN ATMOSPHERE OF VIOLENCE NOW
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EXISTING IN ARGENTINA AND FACT THAT LOPEZ REGA PROBABLY NUMBER

TWO TARGET OF LEFT AFTER RUCCI, IT WOULD BE FOOLHARDY OF HIM NOT TO GIVE UP SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY--A MOVE WHICH MIGHT APPEASE LEFT AND LEAVE HIM FREE TO CONTINUE TO ACT AS PERON'S PRIVATE SECRETARY, OR, IN MORE OFFICIAL CAPACITY, AS SECRETARY OF PRESIDENCY. IN THIS VEIN, IT INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT LOPEZ REGA WAS ONLY CABINET MINISTER NOT PRESENT WHEN PRESIDENT LASTIRI MADE TELEVISED STATEMENT NIGHT OF SEP 25 CONDEMNING RUCCI' ASSASSINATION. REPORTEDLY, LOPEZ REGA WAS AGAIN AT HOME WATCHING TELEVISION WITH PERON AND ISABEL.
LODGE

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